

Meeting Date: May 17, 2007

Agenda Item No. 15

Agenda Item: Fish and Game Dedicated Funds

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jeff Gould

Background: Dedicated funds and set-aside accounts are established by the Fish and Game Commission or the Idaho Legislature to assure adequate financial resources are available for specific services provided by the department. Several dedicated funds were created to structure or improve financial practices such as budget stabilization, fleet management, and the handling of donations. The remaining funds were created to manage money that is set-aside for specific purposes such as BPA Mitigation at Craig Mountain, big game depredations, salmon and steelhead fishing access, habitat acquisition and development, winter feeding, and non-game management. Previous discussions probed the question “can these funds be combined and used with greater flexibility?” The intent was to consolidate funds and become nimble enough to allocate adequate resources to top priorities in a timely manner. Ultimately, these dedicated funds support critical functions and services, are narrow in scope by design, and may not be the right solution for this concept.

This presentation will review the list of dedicated funds for background purposes but will also cover current and future costs associated with land management, *Access Yes*, and habitat initiatives to substantiate the increasing costs associated with several priority programs. These programs are supported by dedicated funds but also involve traditional license funds, federal funds, and competitive grants. These examples will serve as a platform to begin breaking down the question of how to develop a broad and sustainable funding base that helps the department manage its bottom line, the strategic plan?

Policy issues:

- How will the Commission ensure “all that pay benefit and all that benefit pay” and traditional license fee increases are stabilized?
- What alternative funding sources seem to compliment traditional funding sources the best in Idaho? Which will be supported by the Legislature and citizens of Idaho?

Public Involvement Process: The department has formed a funding committee charged with exploring the possibility of various funding mechanisms to broaden the Department’s funding base. Committee products and information will be presented to the Legislative Ad Hoc IDFG Committee by the Department Legislative Liaison. The Legislative Ad Hoc IDFG Funding Committee will be comprised of three senators, three representatives and three commissioners.

Justification:

As directed by the Commission

Action Requested:

No action required

Staff Recommendations:

Information only